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AMERICA THEN AND NOW: RECOLLECTIONS OF LINCOLN.

TO-DAY, when the United States has joined in the War for Freedom, there is a certain fitness in the publishing of this narrative of the experiences of a young English girl in 1860-4, the fateful years of the Civil War, when, under the leadership and inspiration of President Lincoln, the American nation was finding its soul in a struggle against the slave power of the Southern States. The narrative is taken from letters written, week by week, to her parents and family in England, while she was living in the house of her sister and brother-in-law, an ardent Republican, a high Churchman, and lover of England, where she had opportunities of seeing and talking with many statesmen and politicians. The narrative suggests many points of likeness between the America of 1860-5 and that of to-day. There was the same prolonged hesitation as to the moral issues of the war, and the same inexorable determination of the country when the decision was reached. For the most part, the letters are a running record of daily life full of many interests and social pleasures. The extracts made from them are almost exclusively such as deal with public events of the time. The sketch of these great events is slight indeed. But perhaps it is worthy of note that even these immature comments, and the eager admiration of President Lincoln which they show, testify to the growing significance of the figure of the President and how steadily and surely he moved to his high place in the annals of his country which he has ever since held. The name of the great President occurs early in the letters—in the very first of them—telling how, after the writer's ten days' voyage, in September, 1860, the *Persia* slackened speed at Hoboken to take up the pilot. The author writes:—

“The passengers gathered in a group, awaiting the first news from shore. As the pilot dropped down from the gangway, his first words were, ‘Filibuster Walker is shot, and Abraham Lincoln is nominated President.’ A gentleman beside me murmured thoughtfully, ‘And who the devil is Abraham Lincoln?’ ”

A later letter tells how upon her arrival people were asking what the President (Buchanan) would do:—

Dec. 30th, 1860.

“About 9 o'clock Mr. T. K. came in, in a state of great enthusiasm and excitement, with the news of the evacuation of Fort Moultrie by Major Anderson, who, it seems, is a patriotic man, indignant and disgusted by the treachery of the President (Buchanan), who refused to give him any command for securing the safety of his little band from certain butchery—took the law into his own hands, and now, having spiked the guns of the small fort, has removed his garrison to the impregnable Fort Sumter, which commands the Bay and town of Charleston, the headquarters of the South Carolinian rebels. What will the President do? Will he

recall Anderson? The whole North would rise if he did. If he does not he will lose all the favour of the South for which he has betrayed his trust. 'It means conflict,' said Mr. T. K. 'In such a cause I would turn out myself, at the head of 500 men, and work on our line of railway.'"

The next letter depicts the state of things while the policy of Lincoln, the newly-elected President, was uncertain:—

"For the last month, the secrecy preserved by the President and his Cabinet has completely misled men's minds. Now all the world is startled by the most certain sound of warlike preparation. One hears of the chartering or manning of steamers, the movement of troops, and the provisioning of the forts. Though there has been no official announcement as to the end of these preparations, it is not difficult to guess what it is. I think people are glad that the sullen storm seems about to break. They think that there is a better chance of things being settled, and there is a sense of relief from the gloom and uncertainty of the past month. How the *Times* and the *Guardian* run down Lincoln's 'Inaugural'!"

March (no date), 1861.

"To-day Lincoln is inaugurated, and Buchanan leaves the White House, and hides his diminished head in the safety of his country house. He leaves, followed by hatred and curses. Lincoln's speeches, made on his progress through the Northern States towards Washington, have disappointed people, I think. But everywhere else, in the choice of his Cabinet from both sides of the Republican Party, his quiet determined manner among all the brawling multitude of office-seeking politicians, all has promised hopefully for the future. We are anxiously awaiting the message which will be here to-night, and in which his future policy will be disclosed. A telegram from Washington this morning says he denies the right of secession, means to enforce the collection of the revenue, to reclaim the seized Federal property. All which does not mean compromise."

March (no date), 1861.

"E. C. called for me early, to go to a window for the procession. It passed at 5 o'clock, and went slowly past the house. The street was crowded. Bands played. Feet moving to music always stir my heart! It was somehow queer and incongruous, for the one thought was how this man was going forward to a fate and crisis in the land, and to some great end, perhaps his own death. I could not help feeling this. How he had come from the prairies of the West, and through the great cities of the East, on to the Capital, drawing nearer and nearer to the strange, great future. There were lines of carriages, and smiling and bowing citizens. I kept my eyes on the one face in the carriage with its four white horses, moving slowly. A dim vision of a hero of the backwoods, who had risen up to be the Chief at such a time of storm had been in my mind. There he sat, a man in a hat, and holding a bouquet! It was a hard test, but his face was grave and unexcited. It had almost a sweet expression. You have heard, no doubt, how Lincoln's life has been attempted twice. Attempts to throw the train in which he was off the tracks. No one knows who were the perpetrators."

The next extract takes up the narrative at the first stage of the war, when the Southern armies were victorious and the alarm at their progress spread to Philadelphia:—

April 14th, 1861.

" We are all sitting round the drawing-room table, busily writing. E. has just come in from the library, where he has been writing his *Guardian* letter. There is no need to tell you of the state of excitement we are in here. War has commenced, and everyone's mind is centred on Charleston. For the last three days it has been our one thought. At breakfast time came the great news. E. threw down the *Ledger*, saying ' It is war ! They have fired on Fort Sumter.' Bombardment had followed. It is all confirmed now, and, further, that the Commander has surrendered at discretion, and is now a prisoner in Charleston. Of course, the South Carolinians are, as the correspondent of the *Tribune* says, in ' the condition of hares in March with exultation '—indeed, they say, singing ' Te Deums.' This reverse will be the last sting necessary to raise the North. New England, particularly Massachusetts, is in ferment. There is a rush of volunteers. Some one said :— ' Massachusetts will send 50,000 men, and if that won't do, she will come herself ! ' We had prayers *In Times of War and Tumults* in church to-day. How many ties of relationship and friendly feeling among those we know will be snapt by that gun fired on Charleston Harbour ! There can be no thought of reconciliation now. A breach is made which long years can only in part heal. When one a little perceives what this Anglo-Saxon nature is, and the weight of its determined fury, one realises what this contest may mean. *Monday.*—The news this morning is that the office of the *New York Herald*, the organ of the Democratic Party and the late Government, has been attacked, and has been put under a strong guard to protect it from the mob."

For a time Lincoln did not make clear to the country the true issues in the contest—any more perhaps than did Mr. Wilson in his first years of office.

It is evident from the next extract, which recalls recent scenes in England, that the true issues in the contest had become clearer to the country:—

June 10th, 1861.

" I hear that Mrs. H. speaks about my ' enthusiasm about the American troops.' I detect the innuendo. She refers, I suppose, to what I said about having seen off the regiment at the railway station. Tell her that you may be quite true to your country, and still feel your heart stirred . . . and feel great sympathy with men who are going to probable death—and that voluntarily—in the cause of liberty and humanity, the best cause that ever made men fight. These men are not the automatons of a review. Thousands of them have left their New England fields to fight what they feel to be a barbarous attempt to form a Government whose acknowledged aim is to plant slavery as a basis of Society. These men know what they are fighting for by a sort of instinct, and they go to fight of their own free will. We have had a camp of a Massachusetts company on the slopes below. The Captain is a Methodist Minister ! E. has given them the right to use the spring. We hear their bugles in the morning, and the singing of their evening

hymn. We don't believe that the English Government will acknowledge the Confederacy. It was splendid of M. to write to Mr. Gladstone. And two sheets of polite response!"

Lincoln, after his inauguration in March, passed through Philadelphia on his way to Washington. These are the writer's impressions at the time. She was becoming conscious, with all those about her, that the "Rail splitter" was a born statesman, ready to meet a great emergency.

Dec. 8th, 1861.

" . . . dined with us on Thursday. We had music after dinner. The two R.s sang the curious negro hymn which the Massachusetts regiments have sung while marching, beginning :

' John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave,
But his soul is marching on.
Glory, glory, Hallelujah ! '

It goes with a great swing, and the meaning of the words seems to grow as you sing them.

" It pictures, too, the concourse ever moving southward. Oh, there is no need to despair, dearest mother, about the meaning of the struggle! The end of the abomination of slavery is drawing nearer day by day. No one can doubt it, no one helps seeing it; nothing can stop it now. Every day the resolve to clear off the great curse grows stronger. Last year, my partner at a dance said 'Pray do not call yourself an abolitionist! You cannot know what it means.' . . . Mr. ——, who has just come back from England, says his feeling is quite changed. While he was away he felt despair as to the success of the North. But since he has known the spirit here, he doubts no more."

Among the Quakers there were many "Conscientious Objectors." But many others obeyed what they thought was a higher call :—

April, 1863.

" Mr. T.K. as we walked home from the pine wood, where we went to gather violets—lovely tall creatures without scent, but of a heavenly colour—told me that there was great enthusiasm among the young Quakers. Almost without exception they had taken up arms; in most cases with the full consent of their parents. Some men look on this war as a religious movement; a crusade against a wrong done to humanity."

By 1863 the whole nation felt that it had espoused a great cause, and possessed a worthy leader, one whose perfect honesty did not prevent his meeting difficulties with an adroit diplomatic touch :—

No date. 1863.

" Everyone agrees about the President and his last message. There is a steady growing confidence in him. The truthfulness of his character shows itself in every word and act. How he manages all the violent difficulties of party feeling in Washington is wonderful. He is torn by deputations, 'to stand by the Constitution'; by others, 'to revise it'; and by others, 'to throw it to the dogs'! A deputation of Abolitionists waited on him the

other day. They pressed on him a scheme of immediate emancipation. He listened to them, and said : ‘ Gentlemen, all you say is very interesting—very true. I agree with you. But you are just six weeks ahead of me.’ ”

In these extracts the writer records some conversations her brother-in-law had with the President :—

March, 1864.

“ E. has returned from Washington. He has had most interesting talks with the President about present affairs. The President seemed pleased to talk about England. He said he believed England would do right with regard to the South, that the Democratic-Bubble-Bursting party was comparatively small, that the great mass of the English people, those that bear the national character, as it were, are strong enough to overcome the Manchester cotton spirit. The President told E. that he believed there was a strong union party in many of the Southern States—even in South Carolina. I have just seen a humming bird, the brightest, loveliest of flitting creatures ! ”

“ E. told a story about a great case—I ought to remember the name, but I don’t—in which Lincoln was retained. It was years before he was nominated President. The story was told to E. when he was in Washington by another lawyer also retained in the case, and on the same side. The fee which Lincoln had obtained in the case enabled him to contest the State against Douglas for the Senatorship, and the speeches he made at that time gave him fame, and eventually caused his nomination. Strangely enough Mr. Stanton, the present Secretary of War, and Mr. Seward, were his colleagues in the case. When they met for consultation before they went down to the Court the two were rather aghast at the appearance of the huge, uncouth Illinois man, and when Lincoln said, ‘ Well, gentlemen, shall we go down in a gang? ’ Seward said to Stanton, ‘ I don’t want to go down in his gang. Let us go down by ourselves.’ But you see they were destined to go in his gang ! ”

The writer’s visit to Washington was in 1864, where she had many opportunities of meeting the chief political leaders, and where it was her privilege to have an interesting talk with the President :—

Willard’s Hotel, Washington.

Feb., 1864.

“ Washington is the centre of political life, and Willard’s is the centre of Washington, whence come the rumours and epidemics of excitement. Here are many families of Senators and Members of Congress during the Session. Then it is the daily resort of generals, and other officers, contractors, politicians, even poets, for Walt Whitman, with his long hair on his shoulders, is here. . . There is always somebody of importance to be pointed out as you go up and down stairs. On the first floor runs a wide passage, or corridor, from one end of the building to the other, always crowded with men, men, men. Men of all kinds, who congregate here to hear the last news from the front. Here spring the rumours thick and pervading as the fumes of tobacco, which find their way into every room. An atmosphere of excitement is everywhere, and

everything articulate or silent carries one's thoughts to the battlefield—which is not far off.

"One evening we dined at the Secretary of State's. It was a French dinner with numberless courses, though one could not but be struck with certain touches of dignified simplicity about the house (of the same feeling, I suppose, as makes Mrs. Seward wear no hoops, and a flat topped bonnet). The table was very elegant with old silver and glass. At either end of the table were huge silver 'ice pitchers,' and most of the dishes were silver. I sat next to Mr. Fred Seward, and at Mr. Seward's end of the table. There was very animated talk about the new currency, about the National Bank, and the Army payments. Mr. Seward, eating innumerable olives as he talked, spoke with great energy and decision—with his rather remarkable profile he looked something like a huge bird. A Mr. Morrell, who was the exponent of some system of protection, talked a good deal about the people in the Western States having been reduced to a state of barter, for want of currency.

"All to-day we have spent seeing the great buildings, the making of the "greenback" money—it seemed to be made very easily; the camps, hearing and seeing every moment things suggesting the war, and the thousand interests connected with it; meeting a regiment on the march, or a company of contrabands, men, women, and children, with their black, weary faces, on their way to the Contraband Camp. Here and there we saw a huge black sign, '*Dr. ——, Embalmer of the Dead.*'

"We have visited the Capitol, its immense white dome shining like an iceberg through the trees. You reach it by great flights of steps, with here and there a statue to cheer the rather steep ascent—the Indian and the white man in attitudes more satisfactory to the white man than the Indian. It is '*Low the poor Indian*' indeed. You pass down long corridors and passages, and enter the gallery of the Senate. In the House of Representatives fortune favoured us with the most momentous debate of the Session, they say; Valandigham on one side, and Bingham on the Government side. V. is secessionist of the darkest dye. Mr. Bingham's speech aroused great feeling. He dined with us afterwards, and we talked of Ruskin, and Mr. Carlyle, and he had much to say about Aunt Mary—Howitt—whom he greatly admires. We went into the Supreme Court with its row of black-robed judges—the only official costume in the length and breadth of this great land. The Chief Justice, I think it was, who descended from his height, and chatted with Mr. M. We went to the levée yesterday. As the President sent you a special message I must not delay in telling you about it. It was at one o'clock, an hour for bonnets and morning dress. The entrance to the White House was thronged with carriages. We passed through the great hall, and to an anteroom filled with elegantly dressed people. The air was pleasant with the scent of flowers. People stood in groups talking. In the Blue Room beyond, the President stood receiving the stream that flowed towards him, and thence passed into the great East Room, and so out. While the others were busy talking to a number of their friends I watched the President. He shook hands and bowed, only occasionally speaking to someone he knew, or chose to distinguish by his notice. Some-

times he answered a remark made to him. But it was generally, 'Good morning, Mrs. Jones.' 'Mr. Smith, how do you do?' (You see how carefully I write this that you may note the pleasing difference of your daughter's reception!) 'Miss —, of England.' 'Ah,' said the President, and he stooped his great height to look into my face. He looked so kind that I forgot to be frightened. I forgot what he first talked of. Then I blurted out, 'Mr. Lincoln, may I tell you how earnestly my people at home are with you in heart and soul, especially since the 1st of January.' 'I am very glad to hear it; very glad, though I may not know them personally. That is one of the evils of being so far apart. We have a good deal of salt water between us. When you feel kindly towards us we cannot, unfortunately, be always aware of it. But it cuts both ways. When you, in England, are cross with us, we don't feel it quite so badly.' He smiled as he said this, and then he went on quite gravely, 'I wish England were nearer, and in full understanding with us.' Colonel Davies said something about my having been unhappy over the *Trent* matter, and the prospect of war between England and the United States. Mr. Lincoln said that he thought there were three parties in England, an aristocratic party, which will not be sorry to see the Republic break up, a class allied to the South through trade relations, and a third, larger, or if not larger, of more import, which sympathises warmly with the cause of the North.' He turned to me again, and took my hand in his—it was a large hand!—and said with great kindness, 'Tell your friends in England this, and tell them I am obliged to them for their good wishes. It is pleasant to have good wishes, and,' he added, smiling, 'I take it there will be no war.' That was all. We courtseyed and shook hands with Mrs. Lincoln. She was dressed in black velvet, black gloves and fan, in mourning for her little boy, who died in the summer. We stood not far from the President for some time, and I watched him with all my eyes. He was dressed in a black long coat that seemed to hang on him. He wore his collar turned down, showing his throat—the reverse of the Gladstone habit. He held one of his black gloves in his hand, and beat it slowly against the other while he was speaking. I could hear all he said. He did not look grand or aristocratic, or even like a very cultivated man, but you knew he was *great*. One felt that he said what he meant to say, neither more nor less. He used very good words, and he half-smiled now and then, like a person who *hears* that what he is saying is good, and a little enjoys it. But when he was silent his face instantly assumed an anxious, careworn expression. But he did not look perplexed. I felt he was the man who had written the 'Inaugural,' and that he was the only man who could have done it.

"On the staircase was a boy of about twelve who was doing his best to upset the gravity of the servants handing up the guests, and playing pranks. Mrs. M. spoke to him and he replied politely, and behaved at once with the dignity and propriety proper in the son of a President. I think they called him Thad.

April 17th, 1865.

"On Saturday afternoon I drove into town to post the English letter at the General Post Office. As we entered the city, all fluttering with flags for the late victories, the streets were full of silent crowds standing or moving to and fro, the press

growing denser as we neared the State House. I had to leave the carriage to wait for me in a side street, and make my way for a short distance on foot. As I stood having my letter weighed and stamped a strange sound outside made the groups of persons in the office, and me with them, run to the door, where, from the high flight of steps we looked down on the crowd stretching down the street. I had never heard such a sound before. It was hoarse, and like a long growl. There was a movement in the crowd, a group of policemen were vigorously defending with their clubs three men, evidently the objects of the anger of the crowd. I could see the pale, terrified faces of the three men. The crowd were bent on lynching them. Men shouted that they were Secesh sympathisers. They had shouted *sic semper tyrannus*, when the news came that the President had expired.

"The P.O. clerks came and called us in and the great doors were hastily shut. I had to make my way, led by a civil clerk, through the back buildings and yards to the carriage. The sunshine seemed dimmed by the horrible glimpse I had had of strange passions. We had to drive slowly through the crowded streets. At all the churches which we passed, the doors were open, and one could catch sight of the people kneeling. I stopped at Trinity Church. The church was crowded from wall to wall, and the Litany was being said by Mr. Phillips Brooks. His rapid utterances—a sort of passionate energy of utterance—and the sense of universal sorrow made the familiar words seem to have a new meaning. Many near me were weeping. One knew that the whole land, from ocean to ocean, was stirred and lifted by a great sorrow. On a step near the church was a poor black woman sitting with a little child beside her and one in her arms. She rocked herself to and fro and repeated the words, 'Massa Lincum dead! Massa Lincum dead! . . . Those few hours from Friday night to Saturday evening passed as if under a spell. The glory of spring was over all, the dogwoods were shining with their milk-white blossoms, the Judas trees and the sassafrases were purple and cold, and the magnolias were opening, but all the spring glory seemed hushed and made solemn by the thought of the President. A shock of wonder and remorse has come, and a passionate acknowledgment of what we owe him.

The eyes of all did, indeed, seem to be opened to what they had been slow to perceive. They saw how Lincoln, always showing the way, by a sort of divine intelligence, had led the country through the dangers of a revolution to a new life. The whole nation recognised the light of a great soul. The youthful writer of these letters shared in that great experience. Often, looking back during the last two years after an interval of more than half a century, and watching the mysterious unfolding of events here and in the United States, she has felt as if she were passing through the same experiences as were hers when, as a girl, she visited America. There were then, as lately have been here, uncertainty and momentous swaying of opinion to and fro, slowly growing enlightenment, and, at last, the clear and final purpose ensuring victory.

AGNES MACDONELL.

THE REPORT OF THE AGRICULTURAL POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE.

IT was extremely appropriate that Lady Wernher should have bought Fred Walker's picture of "The Plough" for presentation to the nation on the same day that the report of Lord Selborne's Agricultural Policy Sub-Committee of the Reconstruction Committee was published. The picture should be hung in the place of honour in the Board of Agriculture when, after the war, we turn our swords into ploughshares, and the Ministry of Munitions leaves the office that had been built for the Board. For it is the policy of the plough which the Committee advocates, as, in their opinion, it is only by a return to the arable acreage of the early 'seventies that national safety can be secured. The argument of the report, put briefly, is as follows:—"We must grow a far larger proportion of the food we consume, first, as a national insurance against war; secondly, in order to develop to the full our natural internal resources; and thirdly, in order to expand our rural population. If we are to grow more food, we must develop agricultural education and organisation, and must remodel village life (and these subjects the Committee will deal with in a later report); but in particular we must insist that large areas of land are put under arable cultivation. If arable cultivation is to be insisted upon, there must be security that the price of cereal crops will not again fall to the level of fifteen or twenty years ago. In this way, and only in this way, can it be shown that arable cultivation, taking good and bad seasons together, can be made to bring in reasonable profits. Guaranteed minimum prices for wheat and oats must, therefore, be given to the farmer, and if the farmer is assisted in this way, fair wages for the labourer must also be insisted upon."

The report is a most admirably and clearly written document. It presents its arguments with great weight and cogency. It deserves very careful study and thought from all interested in the economic and social development of the country, and can in no sense be put aside simply as a plea for State protection for agriculture.

The questions which have to be answered in forming a judgment upon it seem to the writer to be:—(1) Is it desirable to make a great increase in the amount of food which we can produce in this country? (2) If so, is it physically possible to make such an increase? (3) If so, are the means proposed by the Committee the best for the purpose?

The need for increasing our food supplies in the interest of national security was stated to the Committee as an axiom in their terms of reference, and therefore they do not argue it. But nothing is said as to the amount of increase of our home-grown supplies that is necessary in the interest of security, either in the terms of reference or in the report. The point is generally dismissed by saying that we clearly cannot be self-supporting, and that equally clearly the more we can grow the better. Slightly more exactness